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JOHN BANESTER.

1533-1610.

THE commemorative picture which shows John Banester lecturing on anatomy gives several interesting details about him. There is in the first place the record of his age, 48 in the year 1581. He was born, therefore, in 1533. Secondly his armorial bearings, with the appropriate cadency sign, showing that he used the coat armour* of the Banisters of Cobham, and that he was the second son. It follows that he was the second son of John Banister of Cobham, who was one of the Barons of the Exchequer. His books are dated, however, from Nottingham, where he lived for some years. He had relatives there, for the Chamberlain's accounts for the year 1573 record: "Item, given the same day [July 17, 1573] a pottell of wyne and halfe a lb of seugar unto Maister Banyster the Preacher." He may also have had a connection with the Barbers' Company, for a John Banister appears seventy-ninth on the list of members of this Company in 1537.

The first fact now known about him was that he acted as Surgeon to the Forces sent to relieve Havre under the Earl of Warwick in 1563. Here he probably formed a life-long friendship with William Clowes, who speaks of him as "Master John Banester, my dear and loving friend"—a friendship which led Clowes to introduce each of Banester's works with commendatory verses, and to write a long epitaph in verse, which was destroyed when St. Olave's, Silver Street, was burnt in the Great Fire of London.

In 1572 Banister was admitted a member of the Barber Surgeons' Company, and there is a note still extant in the records saying that "Mr. Banester of Nottingham was sworn and admitted a brother of this mystery. Whereupon he hath granted to the House yearly twenty shillings so long as he liveth and to be liberal and commodious to this house in that he may, and will yearly send a buck or two and hath paid ten shillings and shall have his letter of lieence." The note is as remarkable as it is unusual. The friendship of Clowes, or Banister's own family interest, may have gained him admission to the Company—for it is evident that he was never apprenticed—but it was not everyone living in the reign of Elizabeth or in the neighbourhood of Sherwood Forest who could promise to send a buck or two yearly so long as they lived. It is clear, therefore, that he had considerable influence.

In 1573 the University of Oxford granted him a lieence to practise physie. The record runs: "Banister John after seven years in medicine supplicates for a lieence to practise medicine 30th June 1573." He thus acted both as a physieian and as a surgeon, a most unusual combination at a time when the surgeons were still held in thralldom by the physicians.

* Argent, a cross fleury sable. Crest: a peacock sitting, taking in its beak a serpent twined proper round its neck, all proper.



JOHN BANESTER DELIVERING THE VISCERAL LECTURE AT THE BARBER SURGEONS' HALL,
LONDON, IN 1581.

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In 1581 he lectured at the Barber Surgeons' Hall in Monkwell Street, his predecessor being Thomas Hall, the son of John Hall of Maidstone, who was appointed in 1577. In 1585 he served on board ship during the Earl of Leicester's expedition to the Low Countries, and on February 15, 1593-4 he was licensed to practise medicine by the Royal College of Physicians of London, in obedience to a letter signed by Elizabeth, "given under our signet at our manor of Otelands, the xxviiiith day of July in the xxxvth year of our reigne." The reason assigned by the Queen for desiring this favour was that "he desireth to end his old yeares in quietness, as I trust he shall do unless he happened to be molested by any of your College." The College dared not disobey the request, repugnant as it must have been, since Banester was a surgeon. They granted it, but added the condition that "in omni graviori morbo et pleno perieuli unum aliquem ex Soeietate Collegii ut adiutorem sibi in illa euratione aeeersat et adjungat (in every serious and dangerous case he must call in some one else belonging to the College). In 1578 he was living at Nottingham; in 1585 he had moved to London, and lived in Silver Street, where he died in 1610; he was buried in St. Olave's Church in the same street.

Banester wrote: (i). *A needefull, new and necessarie treatise of Chirurgerie, briefly comprehending the general and particular curation of Ulcers taken foorth of sundrie worthy wryters, but especially of Antonius Calmetus Vergesatus and Joannes Tagaltius. Imprinted at London by Thomas Marshe, Anno 1575.* The work is a duodecimo, dedicated to "the Right Worshipfull maister Thomas Stanhope Esquire and high sherife of Nottinghamshire this present yeare of oure Lorde 1575." Following the epistle dedicatory are twenty-five stanzas of verse by the author in praise of "Physieke and Chyrurgerie," which is again followed by an epistle dedicatory to "the Worshipfull Maister, Wardens and generall assistauntes of the fraternity of Chyrurgians in London," and dated from "my house in Nottingham the vi of June 1575." The consideration of the degraded state of surgery again moves him to verse, and he apostrophizes "evil and counterfeit dealers in the art of Physie and Chirurgerie." This apostrophe is followed by commendatory verses by Richard Smith and William Clowes, George Baker, and others, who as surgeons write in praise of the author. The book itself is of no interest. It is a mere dull compilation, without the illustrative eases which enliven the pages of Clowes and Gale.

(ii). In 1578 Banester issued in folio *The Historie of Man sucked from the sappe of the most approved Anathomistes, in this present age compiled in most compendious forme and now published in English for the utilitie of all godly chirurgians within this Realme.* It was printed by John Day. The plates are copied from Vesalius. They have been re-drawn, reduced in size, and the backgrounds altered. As an anatomist Banester prefers Columbus, a point which he has had emphasized in his picture, where he chose to be represented in the act of lecturing from a passage in this author. The introductory verses are again by Clowes. The book itself is without interest.

(iii). *A Compendious Chyrurgie gathered and translated especially out of Wecker at the request of certaine . . . published for the benefit of all his countreyemen by Iohn Banister Master in Chyrurgerie.* The book is a duodecimo "Imprinted by Jon Windet for T. Man and W. Brome." It is

dated "the xxvii of October from mine house in Silver Street." In moving to London it may be noted that the author had changed the spelling of his name from Banester to Banister. The book, like the other two, is uninteresting, except for a short series of four-line stanzas addressed respectively to the Reader, the Printer, and the Translator. The verse "to The Printer" may be given as an example:—

Haste to the presse, feare not the sale,
good wine doth neede no signe;
The Surgeons craue this worke to haue;
the gaine it will be thine.

A collected edition of Banister's works was published in 1633 in six books as a small quarto. The dedications and the text are left; but the poetry, having no doubt served its generation, has fallen on sleep.

It appears after reading Banister's books that he was never a surgeon in the sense that Clowes, Gale, and Barrough were surgeons. He occupied the position of a professor of surgery, and was the exponent of other men's views. He was a teacher rather than a practitioner of his art. As such, he would have no claim to notice in a journal of surgery; but he holds a definite place in the history of English surgery, because it is clear from his prefaces that he was heart and soul with those who, like Clowes and Gale in London, and Hall and Read in the provinces, made a determined attempt, during the reign of Elizabeth, to raise surgery from a trade to a profession. The attempt was made in several directions, partly by improving the examination for surgeons, partly by emancipating surgery from medicine, partly by demonstrating the ignorance of the quacks who then flourished so luxuriantly. But the time had not yet come, and their efforts ended in failure. The surgeons still remained subordinate to the physicians; the examination for admission to the Barber Surgeons' Company was nullified owing to the recommendations of unsuitable persons by powerful patrons, and the quacks continued to multiply in numbers and in influence. Banister either by his personality or by his influence held a higher social position than the other reformers. He alone was admitted to the College of Physicians, and he alone was granted a licence to practise by the University of Oxford. Yet his heart throughout was with Clowes and "The worshipfull the Maister Wardens and generall assistantes of the fraternitie of Chyrurgians in London to whom John Banister (a member of the same) wisheth to them all, the true direction in the perfect way of knowledge to this misterious science according to their profession." He seems in fact to have lent to the movement the same sort of prestige that Pusey lent to the Tractarian movement. Like Hall, Clowes, and Gale, he hated quacks heartily, and addressed them in no measured language in the preface to his *Anatomy*: "As for you, O ye chaff of the earth, ye sting of the Godly, ye impes of Hell and children of wrath, you (I say) that under the pretence of the sacred arte of medicine, devoure the sheepe of God's pasture, flea the labourers in his harvest and denye your Lord the fruits of the vineyard, since no warninges may admonish you, no exhortation amende you, no lawes bridle you, no punishments turne you, nor any feare of God sinke into youre brestes, I, from the depth of my hart renounee you, hoping

assuredly that from none of the flowers of this Garden any of you shall take opportunity to sucke that, which may maintaine the infection of your pestilent wretchedness hereafter." Indeed he gave his daughter Cieely in marriage to John Read, one of the foremost of the reformers, whose early death must have been a severe blow to the cause.

Clowes's epitaph, even allowing for exaggeration, seems to show Banister as a generous and humane practitioner:—

Thy Skill and Praetice, that itself eommends
 Some of the best have truly found the same
 Not partially employed to wealthy Friends,
 But even the poorest Wretch, the Siek and Lane
 Felt of the best: some Difference there might be,
 The Rich paid somewhat, poore Men had it free.
 The Weekly Charity given to the Poore
 In Bread beside, in Money from thy Purse,
 Even in the hardest yeares dealt at the Doore.
 Poore maymed Souldiers, sore siek-hearted Men
 That under Miseries hard Crouch did bow,
 Were freely eured, methinkes they ery, Lord, when,
 Where shall we find our good Physician now?

The original of the picture which is here reproduced is in a volume of 'Master John Banister's Anatomical Tables,' in folio, which is in the Hunterian Library at Glasgow. The picture is double page, mounted on guards, and backed with modern white paper. It represents John Banister delivering the "visceral lecture" in the Barber Surgeons' Hall at Monkwell Street. The carefully painted figure in the Master's hat and the furred gown is probably the Master of the Company for the year 1581. If so, he is Robert Mudcsley, to whom Thomas Vieary bequeathed "my best single gowne faced with blaek satten." He is also mentioned in the 1569 grant of arms as one of those governors of the Barber Surgeons' Company who petitioned for some permanent mark in their armorial bearings* to commemorate the union of the Barbers and Surgeons. The grant by letters patent took the form of "an augmentation in ehief to their old and auneient arms with heaulme and erest to the same." It was perhaps for this reason that the painter has introduced the new coat of arms into the picture, containing a lion of England and two crowned Tudor roses.

The two senior stewards of anatomy are distinguished by their badges. It was enacted in 1555 that there should be chosen every year two "for the Anathomye and other two also to be chosen for to be stewards; so that two always shall stande for ij yeres because they that doo not worke of the

* The arms of the Barber Surgeons are those granted to the United Company by Sir Gilbert Dethiek, Garter King at Arms, in 1569. They are: "Quarterly the first sables a cheveron betweene three Flewmes argent; the seconde quarter per pale argent [and vert on a spatter of the first, a double Rose gules and argent crowned golde; the third quarter as the seconde and the fourth as the first. Over all on a Crosse gules a lyon passant gardant golde; And to their Creaste upon the heaulme on a Toree argent and sables an Opinaeus golde; Mantelled gules doubled argent; Supported with two Linxe in their proper eoulor about their neekes a erowne with a chayne argent pendent therat." The motto "De praeseientia Dei," which is still used by the Company of Barbers, now first appeared in the armorial bearings of the Barber Surgeons.

Anatomy the one yere being Stewards for the provysyon of victualls they shall worke the other yere following. And they that shalbe chosen shalbe alwayes for the first yere Stewards, because that they shall see the makynge of them the yere before that they may be the more practysed in the doynge the next yere the sayed Anathomye that after it maye appeare by the workmanship that they be the dooers. Yf the Master and governors do goo about to breake the same acte, they shall lose for a fyne to the hall xls."

The class consists of the members of the Barber Surgeons' Company, who were obliged to attend the lectures under penalty of a fine.

The picture is interesting from many points of view, and first historically. It represents almost with the accuracy of a photograph the method of conducting anatomical teaching in London at the end of the sixteenth century, and, so far as is known, it is the only illustration of the lectures given at the Barber Surgeons' Hall. It furnishes additional facts about John Banister. It is clear that he was the Company's visceral lecturer in 1581, which was not previously known. The minute accuracy of the picture is shown by the vade mecum which is used as the text of the lecture, and it will be noticed that the skeleton is supported and crowned with the colours of the Barbers' Company, and a wreath of the same surmounts the helmet in Banister's arms. The book on the reading desk is "*Realdus Columbus*," and from its size it might be the folio edition printed at Venice in 1559. Reference shows, however, that the passage in this edition is on folios 227 and 228. The picture gives the pages 419 and 420. An octavo edition was published at Paris in 1572, and in Chapter 5 of Book xi the latter part of the passage quoted is found, just as the painter saw it, on pages 419 and 420. The minute detail is also shown in the drawing of the scissors, the different shapes of the dissecting knives, the double-headed retractor held by the steward of the anatomies, and by the Company's badges worn by the lecturer and stewards. Of the drawing from the artistic point of view it is less easy to speak. The two main figures of John Banister and the Master of the Company seem to be careful studies from life; the stewards and the audience are less carefully drawn. The body seems to have been drawn from the actual subject, who has a shrunken right leg—perhaps the result of old infantile paralysis—for the right foot is in a valgus position. The lecture is given on the passage: "*Intestina igitur a ventriculo exoriuntur, eademq'; penè substantia videntur; licet aliquantulum tenuiore. Situs eorum est ab inferiori ventriculi orificio ad anum usque, abdominisq'; majorem partem occupant. Veteres Anatomici intestina in sex partes distinxere, distinctisque singulas nominibus appellanere. Ego verò si post tot seculorum recepta vocabula noui aliquid in medium proferre fas esset, intestina duo esse dicerem, quorum alterum tenue est, crassum alterum. Sed ut aliorum vestigia sequamur; (neque enim temere a veterum placitis discedendum est), sex esse dicemus intestina, duodenum, inquam, jejunum, ileon, coecum, colon, reetumque.*"

Throughout the Middle Ages the surgeons of London were taught systematically and practically. The Barber Surgeons' Company, from its formation in 1540, organized a regular staff for the purpose, consisting of a Lecturer, who was sometimes a member of the Company but was more often a young physician fresh from Oxford or Cambridge, of four assistants, sometimes called

‘Masters’ and sometimes ‘Stewards’ of the Anatomies, and an audience consisting of the members of the Company. The subjects were obtained from the place of execution, and were four malefactors yearly. The lectures were three in number, the ‘osteological,’ the ‘visceral,’ and the ‘muscular,’ and great care was taken that they should be conducted decently and in order. They were public, or at least so public that any person could attend upon the introduction of a member of the Company, and they ended with a dinner, which was one of the most important annual functions of the corporation. The following extracts will give an idea of the conduct of the business:—

“The body having been brought to the Hall,” it is ordered in 1567, “there shal be pyllars and rods of iron made to beare and drawe Courtaynes upon and aboute the frame where within the Anathomy doth lye, and is wrought upon, for bycause that no person or persons shall beholde the dissections of the body, but that all may be made cleane and covered with fayer clothes untill the doctor shall come and take his place to read and declare upon the parts desected. And also yet fordermore that there shal be a case of weynscot made with paynter’s worke upon it, as seemly as may be done for the skelleton to stand in.”

Care was taken not only in choosing the lecturer, but his material comfort was provided for. It was enacted in 1555 that the stewards “which be appointed for the Anathomye for the year next following must sarve the Doctor and be about the body. They should see and provide that there be every yere a matre about the harthe in the hall that Mr. Doctor [be] made not to take colde upon his feete, nor other gentlemen that doo come and marke the Anatomye to learne knowledge. And further, that there be ij fyne white rodds appointed for the Doctor to touche the bodye when it shall please him, and a waxe candell to loke into the bodye, and that there shall be alwayes for the Doctor two aprons to be from the shoulder downward ; and two payre of Sleeves for his hole Arme with tapes for chaunge for the sayed Doctor, and not occupye one Aprone and one payr of Sleeves every day, which ys unseemly. And the Masters of the Anathomye that be about the bodye to have lyke aprones and sleeves every daye both white and cleane, yf that the Masters of the Anathomye that be about the Doctor do not see these thinges ordered and that their knyfes, probes and other instruments be fayer and cleane accordingly with Aprones and Sleeves, if they doo lacke any of the said thinges afore rchersed he shall forfayte for a fyne to the hall xls.”

It is to be remembered, too, that if fines were not paid, the Company had the power of summary committal to the Compter or even to Newgate.

The attendance at the lectures was compulsory. The ordinance of 1572 enacts that “every man of the company usinge the mystery or faculte of surgery, be he freman, fforeyne, or alian straunger shall come unto the Anathomye, being by the Beadle warned thereunto. And for not keepinge their houre both in the forenoone and also in the afternoone, and being a freman shall forfayt and paye at euery tyme iiijd. The fforeyn in like manner and the Straunger euerye tyme vjd. The said fynes and forfaytes to be employed unto the Anathomysts for the tyme beyng, towards their charges within the tyme of the sayd Anathomye. And also for not comyng in all the tyme of the Anathomye (having lawful occasion of absence) the

Freeman shall pay vjd., the fforreygne vijd., and the Straunger xijd. And to be employed in manner and fourme aforesaid. And also iijs and iiijd. to the Masters and Gouvernours of the said Mystery for their summons brakinge notwithstanding. Provided also that they come well and decently appareyled for their own honestye, and also for the worshippe of the companye."

The following directions, which were evidently given by an old elerk of the Company to his suecessor new to the office, show how the business of a leecture was conducted. They are headed: "Form of the business at the time of a Publie Demonstration of Anatomy."

"So soon as the body is brought in deliver out your ticketts, which must first be filled up as followeth—4 sorts: The first fforme to the Surgeons who have served the office of Master you must say, Be pleased to attend, etc., with which summons you send another for the demonstrations; to those below the Chaire you say, Our Masters desire your Company in your gown and Flatt Cap, &c., with the like notice for the Demonstrations as you send the Antient Master Surgeons. To the Barbers, if Aneient Masters, you say, Be pleased to attend in your Gound only; and if belowe the Chaire then, Our Masters desire, etc., as to the others above without the Tickett for the Demonstrations.

"The body being by the Masters of Anatomy prepared for the leecture (the Beadles having first given the Doctore notice who is to read, and taken orders from the Master or Upper Warden of the Surgeons' side concerning the same), you meet the whole Court of Assistancie in the Hall Parlour, where every gentleman clothes himself, and then you proceed in form to the Theatre (vizt), the Beadles going first, next the Clerk, then the Doctor, after him the severall gentlemen of the Court. And having come therein, the Doctor and the rest of the Company being seated, the Clerk walks up to the Doctor and presents him with a wand and retires without the body of the Court until the leecture is over, when he then goes to the Doctor and takes the wand from him with directions when to give notice for the reading in the afternoon, which is usually at five preeisely, and at One of the elock at noon, which he pronouncees with a distinct and laudable voice by saying: 'This Leecture, Gentlemen, will be continued at Five of the elock preeisely': having so said, he walks out before the Doctor, the rest of the Company following down [to] the Hall Parlour, where they all dine, the Doctor pulling off his own robes and putting on the Clerk's gownd first—which has been usuall for him to dine in—and after being plentifully regaled, they proceed as before untill the end of the third day, which being over (the Clerk having first given notice in the fforenoon that the leecture will be continued at Five of the elock preeisely, at which time the same will be ended), he attends the Doctour in the Cloathing Room, where he presents him, folded up in a peece of paper, the sum of 10 li.;0;0, and where afterwards he waites on the Masters of Anatomy and presents each of them in like manner with the sum of 3 li.;0;0, which concludes the duty of the Clerk on this account.

"N.B.—The Demonstrator, by order of the Court of Assistants, is allowed to read to his pupills after the Publick Leecture is over for three days and untill Six of the elock on each day, and no longer, after which the remains of the body is decently interred at the expense of the Masters of Anatomy, which usually amounts unto the sum of 3;7;5."

